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843 carried is not *pék* other miscarriages will follow. A miscarriage is merely a dead child and has no sort of moral significance. It is possible that if a woman were pregnant by a bastard she would try to hide the miscarriage; this is *nam-toak* and she and her village will be punished with storms and hail which will destroy the crops.

[847] Except in the theoretical case of a girl being delivered of a bastard in the forest and there killing it, infanticide is not permitted for any reason whatsoever; neither monsters nor deformed infants nor even incestuously begotten children will be killed.

844 To procure easy delivery a Mun will offer two chickens to Sor *moong* in the seventh or eighth month of pregnancy. Easy or difficult labour is considered to be a hereditary quality; a woman who after easy deliveries suddenly has a difficult one is considered either to have helped a woman in child-birth who had difficult labour, or to have eaten some of the food of such a woman. If labour is difficult a Mun and lama will be called in to find out the cause of this, which is almost certain to be the breaking of some pre-natal taboo, probably by the father. If this is discovered by divination the appropriate steps will be taken to remove the *tamtoom* by the undoing or unlocking that which had been incorrectly completed

[845] or locked. It may be noted that it is impossible to procure an abortion or still-birth by the intentional breaking of pre-natal precautions; any such act which can kill the child will also kill the mother.

About a month before delivery is expected some specially strong *chi* is prepared and put aside; this must on no account be touched by anybody until the third day after delivery, when it is served at the birth feast; and, for a month after, it is given as a specially strengthening food to the newly delivered mother. Apart from this no special preparations are made for birth, which takes place in the husband's house; all the members of the household are present at the birth, but no strangers unless a Mun or lama has to be called in to give his services to help a difficult delivery. The mother is delivered in the kitchen; a rope is suspended from the ceiling to which she clings, squatting; she may be helped by the father or parents-in-law or anybody who knows how, who will squat behind and press on the woman's breasts and belly. As soon as the baby has appeared the cord is cut and the part attached to the baby tied up; then the baby is washed in luke warm water, wrapped in a cloth, and given the breast. Anybody who knows how can cut the navel-cord—the mother or father or anybody else who has

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experience and a small knife. Babies are not slapped to make them cry or take in air; they do so, it is said, automatically. Nothing is done to the mother's breasts to induce lactation. Considerable anxiety is felt, especially by the father, if the afterbirth is long in descending; if there is a delay the severed and tied navel-cord is attached to the mother's toe and she is then *pék* by a Mun. As soon as the afterbirth has appeared it and the cord are rammed into a bamboo container which is carefully covered with a cloth. Somebody not too nearly connected with the delivered parents will take this and either throw it into the river or fasten it high up on a tree out of the way of insects and animals; for should it be eaten the child will suffer from skin eruptions. Formerly the afterbirth used to be buried but now this is no longer done; for if it is buried in wet ground the child will get eye disease, if in cultivated ground the crops will be spoilt. One or two people said that in certain family lines the afterbirth is still buried, but I could not get any concrete examples of this practice.

If after the birth the blood does not flow freely a blood clot will be formed; to remove the clot the mother is given hot soup and drinks, and fish boiled in butter; if the clot does not come down she will die.

If labour is difficult a fowl and a goat should be sacrificed; the mother must eat the fowl by herself. The goat's heart, lungs, and liver must be boiled and hashed and mixed with rice and offered to the gods and devils; the rest of the meat belongs to the officiants.

It is believed that with breach presentation it is impossible for the baby to be born alive and it is rare that the mother should survive this; it is due to one of the parents having tied up a packet at one end to carry food and then, instead of taking the food out of the mouth, to have taken it out of the tied end. It is good if a new-born baby has hair, but should a child be born with a tooth in its head (a thing unheard of) that baby will be an incarnate devil. It will be reared, but when it grows up its thoughts and curses will be able to kill people. No cases are known of a child born in a caul; if it did occur it would be lucky. A child is unaffected by being born with a strangulating cord; it is the *tamtoom* of one of its parents having twisted a rope or string round their neck in the later stages of pregnancy. Birth-marks vary in their significance according to their place and colour. Big splodgy birth-marks show that in its former incarnation the child was a cow; red marks on the hands and arms that the child was formerly a killer of men—a soldier

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845 or murderer. Marks with no definite significance show that the expectant parents had daubed their bodies or faces with paint.

Multiple births are excessively rare. There is one case of girl triplets being born in the neighbourhood, but none of them survived the age of three months. Twins are also very uncommon; twins of the same sex are considered lucky; if they are disparate it is lucky if the girl is born first; should the boy be born first it is bad and the children will die young. It is a cultural axiom that it is desirable for the first child to be a girl as she will be more help to the mother with subsequent children. But this axiom presupposes large families which are now uncommon; and many people have said to me that, though most people would prefer their first child to be a girl, they personally would prefer a boy, so as to be certain of having an heir, and somebody to live with them and look after them in their old age. It is also a cultural axiom that a father is more pleased at the birth of a daughter, and the mother at the birth of a son, and it is expected that parents will prefer their children of the opposite sex, but this is by no means always borne out in practice.

A still-born infant will be immediately taken down to the river by two or three friends of the parents; a Mun will prepare a bunch of stinging and prickly plants and will wait for the carriers to return, so that he can *pék* them some way away from the house. In such a case the mother's milk will be expelled on to a hot stone to dry up the flow; she cannot nurse other babies as her milk would be harmful for them.

Still-born babies and infants reincarnate immediately as the devil Ing-bong *moong*, and in this guise try to kill other children by giving them infantile diarrhoea. Ing-bong *moong* takes the form of a 'small wind' (probably a dust devil) and makes a noise first like a bird and then like a child. If two people together come across one they can dispose of it in the following way; one will chase the 'small wind' towards the other who will hack it with his knife when it arrives. If on the morrow a dead insect is found at the spot where the wind was it is a sign that the devil is dead.

597 853 Should the mother die in child-birth, there is considered to be little hope of saving the child, unless there happens to be a nearly related woman willing and able to nurse the baby. If the baby is three weeks old or over when its mother dies it may be reared on cows' milk; this is given in a cup through the stem of a plant which, when the outer bark is removed, resembles an indiarubber teat.

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843 may not be neglected in order to bring about an abortion, or the early death of the child, since this would also cause the death of the mother. Incidentally, it may be noted that if a baby is seen at any time to be suffering from swollen
[755] stomach (wind?) it is usual to wave a bladder over it which is filled with various kinds of grain and butter.

[824] Here are some more pre-natal precautions. Wild potatoes should not be eaten if found lodged between two stones. Poles should not be stuck into the ground; and it is inadvisable to tie anything into a knot, or drive in nails. It would be well also to avoid putting the small stones in between the large ones to fill up the cracks in building a wall. Care should be taken not to look upon a dying or dead snake, as this would certainly bring misfortune of one sort of another.
[821] One should not look at a solar or lunar eclipse or the child will certainly be stillborn; and in the case of a solar eclipse it would be better to remain indoors all day. If some child has recently died, both its house and the paths it was accustomed to use should be avoided; and it is indeed better to avoid the house of any recently deceased person. No
[845] paint or other colouring matter should be put on the body during the months of pregnancy or the stains will be reproduced on the body of the child. If it is necessary, for any reason, to sew food up in a bag, care should be taken that it is not again taken out from the sewn end, or this will result in breech presentation. If it is necessary to open such a bag the unsewn bottom end should be slit open and the sewn top left intact.

843 There was one small girl in Lingtem who squinted. This
826 was the result, so everyone said, of her father squinting with one eye, perhaps to aim or to see if a roof was straight, during her mother's pregnancy; and nearly every physical defect of this sort, birth-marks, and such-like, is attributed to the neglect of some pre-natal precaution. All these precautions—and there are doubtless many more of which I have no knowledge—must be observed by both parents from the fifth month of pregnancy until three days after the

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descend with the afterbirth, thus causing the death of the mother. The following actions during pregnancy are also likely to have the same effect: eating carrion; eating rice scraped from the very bottom of the pot, and accordingly slightly burnt.

The umbilical cord is generally cut with a small knife by some woman helper; but if necessary the mother may do it herself. The slough of the cord is carefully kept and when it drops off is tied to the child's necklace. It is usually thrown away when the child reaches the age of four or five; but if lost or thrown away before this period it is said that the baby will crawl to the fire-place and scratch amongst the ashes searching for it. The actual cord, together with the afterbirth, is put into a small bamboo container, covered with a cloth, and taken to the forest by the father, where it is hung up on a tree out of reach of insects and animals. Some people say that the container is either buried in the ground or thrown into a stream; but there seems to be an idea that if the thing is buried by chance in wet ground, for instance, it means that the child will have weak and running eyes in later years; if buried in cultivation it would spoil the crops; and if the afterbirth should, by chance, be eaten by insects or wild animals it might later suffer from skin eruptions. For these reasons the container is usually hung up in a tree; but, as usual, it does not really matter. Kalimpong Lepchas think that if the afterbirth is taken too far away from the house there is a danger that a long time will elapse before another child is born; but this idea appears not to be known in Jongu.

A stillborn child is taken straight away and thrown into the nearest river. On the way back a Mun will meet the parents some little distance outside their house and will wave such things as thorny plants over them: but there is otherwise no form of ceremony; nor need the pre-natal precautions be continued up to the third day, when it is found that the child is already dead. When a child is stillborn, or dies very shortly after birth, a large stone is heated and the child's

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mother milked on to it. When this is done the milk on the stone at once dries up with a frizzling noise: this is an example of what Frazer calls "sympathetic magic," and is done in the hope of stopping lactation. 845

There appears to be no cessation of sexual intercourse up to the time a child is born, but a man does not sleep with his wife for the seven days following birth. We shall see, later on, that certain men other than the husband also have the right to sleep with a woman, but it is thought that the husband alone should have relations with his wife once it is known that she is pregnant. Sexual relations in general will be discussed later, but this seems a suitable place in which to mention the special ritual sexual intercourse, called *Tung Bong Zum* (the meaning of which words I have been unable to discover), which takes place between the husband and wife on the seventh night after the birth of a child. 843 833 837

It is believed that many women suffer from severe pains in the stomach during the first few days following their delivery; and especially is this the case when there has been no hæmorrhage. The condition is known as *Saklong*, a word which denotes that a woman has had no flow of blood following the descent of the afterbirth. To prevent this condition the woman is given hot soup, fish boiled in butter, and other hot food immediately she begins to feel the labour pains; and if it cannot be treated at once it is thought that the woman will die. But of much more importance in the cure is the *Tung Bong Zum*, as it is thought that the man's semen will cause the pain to subside. On this occasion, the man enters the woman from behind and is particularly enjoined not to be violent. It is said that many men do not care to copulate in this fashion; but on such occasions the woman will not permit them to adopt the normal position. Once the *Tung Bong Zum* has been performed normal sexual relations may be resumed; but some women do not allow their husbands to have regular relations with them for another twenty days or so, or until such time as they have thoroughly recovered their strength. Very occasionally the 846 833

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its blade can be seen in most of the photographs of women which illustrate this book, projecting from one side. There is no ceremony when a child is presented with its first knife or sickle.

Twins appear to be very infrequent, and there were none in Lingtem. It is thought, however, that identical twins are lucky, fraternal twins being unlucky unless the girl is born before the boy, in which case it does not greatly matter.

When a child cries it is immediately given the breast, even at night, and it is never at any time fed at regular intervals. It sleeps with its mother until it is about five or six, or until the arrival of another child. The youngest child is never weaned and generally sleeps with its parents until it is about twelve years of age. There is no doubt that this has a considerable psychological effect upon the child, for it is very easy to recognise the youngest of a family at all stages of its life. As children they are much more fractious than others, and in later life are inclined to be neurotic. I am aware that this is a generalisation and as such not to be taken too seriously; but nothing short of a prolonged investigation by a trained psychologist, carried out over a considerable number of years, would give evidence of scientific value. I am informed, however, by the Hon. Mary Scott, who has been doing missionary work with the people of the Eastern Himalayas for the past thirty years, that Lepcha girls, when the youngest member of their family, are almost invariably of loose morals. She attributes this—rightly, I think—to the fact that such children have nightly physical contact with their parents until a much later age than is normally the case. When this is suddenly denied them it seems the natural thing for them to seek some other form of bodily contact; and thus it comes about that young mothers of illegitimate children are very frequently themselves the youngest of their families; but the evidence is insufficient to know if the two states can be definitely correlated. I am inclined to think, however, that they can; but this is merely a personal opinion.

Should a baby that is still being breast-fed become ill its